

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 01255 231424Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 OMB-01
TRSE-00 ACDA-10 SAJ-01 SSM-05 /094 W
-----231500 012012 /41

R 231358Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1905
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN
USIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 1255

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SY
SUBJECT: SYRIAN MEDIA SUMMARY FOR FEB 22

1. ALL DAILIES LED WITH PRESS CONFERENCE PRES ASAD HELD FOR
US REPORTERS TRAVELING WITH SECRETARY. HARD-LINE ASPECTS OF HIS
REPLIES GIVEN PROMINENCE. PRESS BANNERED STATEMENTS WHICH
SUPPORTED STOCK SYRIAN FORMULA DEMANDING FULL WITHDRAWAL AND
RESTORATION PALESTINIAN RIGHTS: "PRES ASAD""WE WILL ABSOLUTELY
NOT CONCEDE ANY INCH OF OUR OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. THE
RIGHTS OF PALESTINIANS ARE THE BASIS FOR PEACE."

2. ARTICLES REPORTED ASAD'S CHARACTERIZATION OF TALKS AS
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PAGE 02 DAMASC 01255 231424Z

"USEFUL AND FRUITFUL." REMARKS ALSO SUPPORTED PROSPECTIVE
JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN UNION, DISCOURAGED FORMATION
PALESTINIAN GOVT-IN-EXILE, AND AFFIRMED RIGHT OF PRES
SARKIS TO MOVE FORCES INTO SOUTH LEBANON "IF HE DEEMS IT
APPROPRIATE
." ASAD STATED THAT PLO SHOULD DISCUSS RIGHTS OF
PALESTINIAN PEOPLE "IN COOPERATION WITH THE REST OF US" IF IT

AGREES TO ATTEND GENEVA.

3. ALL FRONT PAGES FEATURED PICTURE ASAD RECEIVING FORMER LEBANESE PRES AND RIGHT WING LEADER, CAMILLE CHAMOUN. SHORT SQUIB ACCOMPANYING PICTURE CONFINED ITSELF TO REPORTING THAT CHAMOUN, HIS SON DANY, AND DEPUTY MICHEL SASSIN TALKED WITH ASAD ABOUT "VARIOUS ASPECTS" OF THE LEBANESE SITUATION.

4. ARTICLES ON LEBANON DEALT WITH MEETING LEBANESE CABINET HELD YESTERDAY. VERY SHORT ARTICLE REPORTED THAT SARKIS HAD RECEIVED SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR FOR MIDEAST, SYTENKO AND DISCUSSED WITH HIM SITUATION IN LEBANON AND RECONVENING OF GENEVA CONFERENCE. WELL-INFORMED LEBANESE SOURCES QUOTED SAYING THAT SARKIS WILL VISIT BOTH FRANCE AND US IN SPRING.

5. ARTICLES ON IRAQ CLAIMED IRAQI MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ADMITTED DEMONSTRATIONS HAD OCCURRED ON FEB 5-6 AGAINST THE IRAQI REGIME. STATEMENT OF MININT OFFICIAL THAT 118 PERSONS STILL DETAINED WAS INCLUDED.

7. EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS SPLIT BETWEEN USING OCCASION OF SYRO-EGYPTIAN UNION TO REAFFIRM SYRIA'S COMMITMENT TO UNIONIST IDEALS AND COMMENTS ON PROBABLE TRENDS FOLLOWING VISITS OF VANCE AND DE GUIRINGAUD. THRUST OF COMMENTARIES WAS THAT NOW ONLY ALTERNATIVES WERE EITHER PROCEEDING TOWARDS COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION THROUGH GENEVA OR RESORT TO WAR.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS SUMMARIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977DAMASC01255
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770062-1023
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770218/aaaaaqfn.tel
Line Count: 89
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e63661c0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30-Sep-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3256171
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SYRIAN MEDIA SUMMARY FOR FEB 22
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SOPN, SY, XF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e63661c0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009